

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 16-18 were allowed, claims 3-4, 6-7, 13 and 27-28 were objected to by the Examiner, and claims 1, 2, 5, 8-12, 14-15, 19-26 and 29-30 were rejected. Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claim 16-18 and for indicating the allowability of claims 3-4, 6-7, 13 and 27-28. Claim 3 has been amended to incorporate the language of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 3-4 should be in condition for allowance. Claim 6 has been amended to incorporate the language of the base claim and one of the intervening claims, i.e. original dependent claim 5. This amendment is believed to place claim 6 in condition for allowance. Claim 7 also has been amended to incorporate the language of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claim 7 should be in condition or allowance.

By this Reply and Amendment, claims 3, 5-15 and 21 have been amended, claims 1-2 and 29-30 have been canceled without prejudice, and claims 3-28 remain pending in the present application. Additionally, one paragraph of the specification has been amended. All claim amendments are fully supported throughout the written description and figures of the specification, and no new matter has been added.

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The Examiner stated the drawings did not show "a plurality of extensions" as recited in certain claims. Applicants disagree with this objection, but minor amendments have been made to the specification, as set forth above, to clarify the language appearing in certain claims. As set forth in the amended paragraph, Figure 12 illustrates "sliding electrical contacts 102" that enable extension and contraction of the electrical connector 88. Specifically, one embodiment of the electrical connector 88 comprises a first housing 104 received in slidable engagement with a second housing 106, and a plurality of conductive rods or wands 108 serve as "conductive extensions" that are slidably received in and form electrical contact with corresponding receptacles 110. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the figures, e.g. Figure 12, properly illustrate the claimed elements, and the objection to the drawings is believed overcome.

Claim 29 was objected to based on improper antecedent basis. However, claim 29 has been canceled without prejudice, and the objection is believed moot.

Claims 21-24 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Based on the Examiner's comments, claim 21 has been amended and the rejection is believed no longer applicable.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by the Sharp et al. reference, US Patent No.: 4,660,910. Independent claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice, and the rejection is no longer applicable.

Claims 8, 10-12 and 14-15 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by the Sharp et al. reference. Independent claim 8 has been amended to clarify the subject matter of the claim, and the rejection is believed no longer applicable.

The Sharp et al. reference discloses an instrumentation sub 10 having a tubular body 11. A tubular housing or cartridge 14 is coaxially mounted within the tool body 11 and is arranged to enclose various electrical devices or electronic circuitry used to obtain measurements or perform functions related to operation of a measuring-while-drilling tool. (See column 4, lines and 16-69). The reference, however, does not disclose or suggest the combination of: an intermediate tubing section coupled to a pair of adjacent tubing sections by mechanical connectors; a power cable spliced by an electrical connector within the intermediate tubing section; and an electric submersible pumping system coupled to one of the adjacent tubing sections, wherein the power cable has "a plurality of conductors to deliver three-phase power to the submersible motor" as recited in amended, independent claim 8. Accordingly, amended claim 8 is patentably distinguishable over the Sharp et al. reference.

Claims 10-12 and 14-15 all ultimately depend from amended, independent claim 8. Accordingly, those claims are patentable over the cited reference for the reasons provided above with respect to claim 8 as well as for the unique subject matter recited in each dependent claim.

Claims 8 and 10 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by the Conner et al. reference, US Patent No.: 5,070,940. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Conner et al. reference is relied on by the Examiner as disclosing an intermediate tubing section 38 coupled to a pair of adjacent tubing sections 36, 14 by a pair of mechanical connectors 45, 47. It is respectfully submitted, however, that these assertions are not supported by the reference. For example, the alleged tubing section 14 is actually a motor 14, and the alleged mechanical connectors 45, 47 actually are temporary shipping covers that do not serve as connectors. (See column 2, lines 27-45). Accordingly, this rejection of claims 8 and 10 should be withdrawn.

Claims 19-20 and 25-26 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by the Reed reference, US Patent No.: 5,795,169. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 19 recites coupling an intermediate tubing section between "a pair of tubing sections of equal diameter to the intermediate tubing section," via a pair of mechanical connectors, and splicing an internal power cable within the intermediate tubing section. In the Office Action, the Reed reference is alleged to disclose each of these elements, and "tubing section (27)" of the Reed reference is cited as an intermediate tubing between a pair of tubing sections of equal diameter to the intermediate tubing section. However, the Reed tubing section 27 is not of equal diameter to adjacent tubing sections. In fact, tubing section 27 serves as a conventional connector in the sense that its diameter is substantially greater than adjacent tubing sections, as clearly set forth in the Reed figures and supporting specification. Accordingly, the rejection of independent claim 19 and dependent claims 20 and 25-26 should be withdrawn.

Claims 29-30 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by the Halpert et al. reference, US Patent No.: 6,545,221. Claims 29-30 have been canceled without prejudice, and the rejection is no longer applicable.

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Sharp et al. reference. Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice, and the rejection is no longer applicable.

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Sharp et al. reference. Claim 9 depends from amended, independent claim 8 and is patentable for the reasons provided above with respect to claim 8 as well as for its own unique subject matter.

A check made payable to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks has been enclosed to cover the extra independent claim fee. However, if the amount is insufficient, please charge Deposit Account Number 50-3054 for any discrepancy .

In view of the foregoing remarks, the pending claims are believed patentable over the cited references. However, if the Examiner believes certain amendments are necessary to clarify the present claims or if the Examiner wishes to resolve other issues by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert A. Van Someren', written over a horizontal line.

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